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PALMER MASTER PLAN

After housing, next up is climate and sustainability



This graphic shows the average age of homes in Palmer and that many were built before lead-based paint was taken off the market after it was discovered to have a harmful effect on the developing brains of children.

By Michael Harrison
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PALMER — The next in a series of public forums hosted by the Palmer Master Plan Steering Committee is 6:30 p.m. Dec. 17 and will focus on “the element of climate adaptation and sustainability.”

No. 6 in the series, the forum will be held virtually and anyone can participate on M-PACT channel 15, Facebook Live and Zoom. Pre-

sentations include interactive features such as polls and are followed by public question and comment periods.

The last forum, held Nov. 19, looked at the issue of housing.

“We’re also going to be discussing issues and opportunities moving toward establishing some goals and actions for this master plan,” moderator Donny Goris-Kolb, a consultant with engineering firm VHB, said.

Among the main conclusions is that Palmer has an aging and limited housing stock, a lack of affordable housing and a need for grocery stores that are within walking distance for more residents. High taxes and a high cost of living — especially for seniors on fixed incomes — are other issues panelists and viewers addressed.

Goris-Kolb opened the forum by defining what a master plan is and reciting the steering committee’s vision statement.

“A master plan is a regulated sort of process,” he said.

“It’s guided by the Massachusetts general law, documents where a community has come from its historical development, what it is today, and what direction it has decided to go into the future. And by that, I mean a collective community where the community has coalesced around an idea and a vision. It serves as a policy guide aligned with that vision and it provides a framework for future land use, decision making and the physical development of a municipality, although it’s not necessarily relegated and limited to land use decision-making as master plans have been expanding in terms of their scope, in terms of public health and in terms of sustainability and climate change.”

Although it’s something town government can use as a framework to plan and execute a range of changes, Goris-Kolb cautioned that it’s a non-binding exercise.

“What’s also important to call out in a master plan is what it’s not,” he said. “It’s not a zoning ordinance. It’s not a subdivision regulation. It’s not a budget. It’s not any rule-making. Again, it’s really just a policy document that is meant to guide the decision making.”

ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS?

Pointing out that detached, single-family homes make up the majority of Palmer’s housing options, Goris-Kolb said “the vast majority” of residents who responded to a survey said “it’s very important” to add duplexes to the mix.

Apartment complexes were deemed “not important at all” by survey respondents.

Besides a lack of new and/or affordable housing and taxes, other issues brought up during the forum were inadequate parking downtown, connectivity, walkability and the need for general economic development.

According to one study cited, a 2014 regional housing plan, Palmer is an “economically distressed town within the region. Poverty has nearly doubled...and it needs expanded housing opportunities.”

Palmer housing forum at a glance

The last Palmer Master Plan Steering Committee meeting, held last month, was a robust, two-hour discussion on the town’s housing issues. Here are some curated facts and comments from the meeting:

Who was there

The majority of participants said they reside in the Thorndike community. About one-third were 60 years old or older while the 21-29 and 40-49 age groups were the next highest demographic represented with 23% apiece. Eight percent were in the 30-39 bracket, 15% said they were between 50 and 59 and no one claimed to be in the 18-20 or under 17 groups. Most — 63% — joined by Zoom. About a quarter tuned in with Facebook Live and the rest were watching on M-PACT-TV

We’re middle-aged

The median age in Palmer is about 42 going on 43. That’s older on average than both the county and state averages. That means an increased need for senior housing in coming years.

Older homes and worth less, too

Only about 8% of the town’s housing has been developed within the last couple of decades. 69% was built prior to 1978.

Median home value in Palmer is significantly lower than the county and state averages.

They said it

Participant Jack Alexander commented, “Is there an accurate known correlation between lowering the poverty rate with increasing low income housing? Instead of focusing so much on

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Courtesy photo

With an escort by the Holland Fire and Police Departments, Santa Claus made a joyful tour through the Holland area last Sunday. Despite the blare of sirens, a hearty “Ho, Ho, Hooooo!” Could be heard throughout the community as residents came to their front doors and yards to greet and wave at the jolly old elf and his uniformed escorts.

Way Finders provides help with rent



Courtesy photo

Hampden County residents facing eviction or who need assistance securing suitable and affordable housing can turn to Way Finders, a non-profit that offers a variety of programs, including help with paying utility bills, finding employment, credit and financial planning counseling, and more.

By Michael Harrison
mharrison@turley.com

REGION — While some people are fretting over getting home for the holidays this year, others are worried about having a roof over their heads at all.

A lack of affordable housing has been an issue long before this year began, but the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated it. The hit the economy has taken because of the virus includes an erosion of jobs and the income that comes with it. This not only puts homeowners and renters in a bind, but landlords as well — particularly those who owe mortgages on their investment properties.

Way Finders, a nonprofit organization serving Western Mass., is working with government agencies such as the Town of Monson Community Preservation Committee and the Massachusetts Dept. of Housing and Community

Development to offer a lifeline to those who need it.

A variety of programs are offered and many are available to eligible residents of Hampden County. One specific to Monson residents can provide up to \$5,000 per household that is in arrears on rent, mortgage, and utility bills.

That type of assistance is also available for those who live outside the town but reside in the county. There’s also help with security deposits and other move-in costs, deposits for utilities and other needs facing people trying to find a home or stay in the one they already occupy.

In addition to emergency financial assistance, Way Finders has a variety of programs to help residents learn how to create a better, more secure life, including:

Credit Success: Way Finders is nonprofit nationally certified by HUD, CHAPA, and the NeighborWorks Nationally Industry

Standards. Credit Success is a financial education program that offers educational workshops, individual support, and guidance to anyone in the community. The program helps families and individuals reach their goals, whether they want to buy a house or a car, pay off student loan debt, or learn how to build excellent credit. Call 413-233-1621 or email homeownership@wayfinders.org

Become a Landlord: For those who already own investment property or would like to. Way Finders is always interested in partnerships with landlords who want to offer affordable homes in good repair and offers education, counseling and other resources to support them. Call 413-233-1542 or email landlordservices@wayfinders.org

Employment Support: Addresses barriers to employment, includes one-on-one career coun-

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EDUCATION

Pathfinder to offer students COVID testing

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

PALMER — In addition to the current safety measures taken to keep its students safe, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School is now preparing to administer nasal swab COVID-19 tests.

Pathfinder Principal and Assistant Superintendent Eric Duda said the reason behind this initiative is due to the state putting out a special pilot program called “Abbott’s BinaxNOW,” which he said was available to select schools. Duda and Registered Nurse Sarah Dunaj pursued the program on behalf of the school.

“It was a competitive application process,” said Duda.

“If the student tests positive, we’re going to trace where that student was and test other students that might need to be tested”

– Eric Duda, Superintendent

“We learned a few weeks ago that we were going to be chosen to be one of the schools that’s allowed to administer these tests for COVID.”

Dunaj said she and fellow RN Anthony Braden will be administering the rapid-result tests.

“There’s multiple classes that we have to take online on how to administer these tests,” said Dunaj. “The results will go directly through the state’s Department of Public Health and notify the students and families [of the results]. First consent has to be taken ahead of time through the families.”

Duda further explained the process and said the school will also administer a consent process in which parents will allow the school to administer the tests should a student display symptoms such as a fever, cough or fatigue.

“If the student tests positive, we’re going to trace where that student was and test other students that might need to be tested,” said Duda.

“We’re going to be able to do these tests immediately, figure out

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Early holiday deadline

Note to readers: The Journal Register will be going to press earlier than usual the next two weeks ahead of Christmas and New Year’s Day. All submissions for the editions that will be published the next two weeks must be received by 4 p.m. Friday. Please email your letters, news, Pet of the Week and all other submissions to mharrison@turley.com. Please note: All text should be sent as either Word or .txt docs and all photos as .jpgs.

Thank you!

Still looking for Xmas gifts? Visit Palmer's newest downtown shop

By Michael Harrison
mharrison@turley.com

PALMER — Starting a new business means taking a risk pretty much always.

During a pandemic? Without question.

But that didn't deter Shelley Boudreau.

After spending more than 20 years in the healthcare field as a CNA and ER medical assistant, Boudreau felt the need to try something different and become her own boss. That her plans collided with the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in with 2020 would not hold her back. The entrepreneurial pull was that strong. And last week, she opened Rusty Heart, a shop featuring country, primitive, and farmhouse home decor, at 1368 Main Street.

The latest addition to Palmer's downtown business scene gives new life to an empty storefront in the heart of the town's shopping district. Of course Boudreau would have preferred to hold her grand opening under more normal circumstances, but as far as the season goes, the timing couldn't have been better.

"I worried about it a little," she said. "But I really wanted to get some of my stuff out for Christmas."

And shoppers were paying attention. The first day of business last Thursday drew several dozen customers to the shop by closing time. Each one had an opportunity to enter a drawing for hourly prizes, including gift certificates to other local shops and restaurants.

Leading up to the first day of business, Boudreau worked her shop's Facebook page. The person who gave Rusty Heart its 100th like won a prize.

So, what prompted such a distinct career shift?

"It was just time for a change and I've always wanted to have a little shop," Boudreau said. "It was just time to open a different book."

The type of shop she opened



Turley Publications photos by Michael Harrison
Carrie Lavallie (right) keeps her mom Shelly Boudreau company behind the counter at Rusty Heart, which opened last week on Main Street in Palmer.



One of the playful pieces for sale at Rusty Heart.

reflects a passion.

"I've always loved country farmhouse primitive [decor]," she said. "My house is full of it!"

So are the shelves in her shop, where you can find clever

signs and figurines and other art that runs from the playful to the sentimental. There are lamps, candles, primitive balls, decorative and utilitarian bowls and dishes and everything else you'd

expect to find — and perhaps some things you wouldn't. Cookies from June's Bake Shop are featured and will be year 'round.

Appropriate for the season, June's Christmas cookies are the current best-seller.

Right now, it's a one-woman operation. But on opening day, Boudreau's daughter Carrie Lavallie joined her behind the counter. She will be a familiar face. Sometime in the new year Lavallie is opening a self-care and tea shop called Soul Revival in the adjoining storefront.

Rusty Heart is open 9-5 Thursdays-Sundays and will stay open until 7 p.m. on Christmas week to accommodate last-minute shoppers. For more information, call 413-289-6084 or visit Rusty Heart on Facebook, where customers can ask questions, leave messages and generally find a high level of engagement.

Corrections

The Journal Register will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 2 or 3. To request a correction, send information to Editor at mharrison@turley.com, or call 283-8393, extension 236. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Journal Register, Attn: Editor 24 Water St., Palmer, MA, 01069.

DEADLINE

The Journal Register has changed its firm deadline for public submissions to Mondays. To get your submission in for that week's edition, email Editor at mharrison@turley.com or call the office at 413-283-8393 by noon on Mondays. We appreciate the cooperation of our readers.



Courtesy photo

Let There Be Lights

Jay Trombly of Trom's Tree Service volunteered his time and truck to light up Main Street Bondsville for the Holidays. The short-staffed Bondsville Chamber is accepting donations for various events and hopes to raise enough money to sustain those and more. Anyone interested in supporting the Bondsville Chamber of Commerce financially can call Melissa Petrasiewicz at 413-531-8835. The chamber wishes everyone a happy and healthy Holiday Season.

Sen. Lesser launches new podcast

SPRINGFIELD — Last week, state Senator Eric P. Lesser announced the launch of "Lunchtime with Lesser," a new podcast version of his weekly "Lunchtime Livestream" updated and formatted for easy on-demand listening.

"Lunchtime with Lesser" is a series of conversations held by Lesser with community leaders and experts that are working on important issues touching Western Massachusetts, covering everything from the proposed East-West Rail that includes a passenger depot in Palmer, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April, Lesser began his weekly "Lunchtime Livestream" with his first guest, Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding during the height of the first wave of the pandemic. He has since hosted over 30 guests from nonprofit, food access, public health, manufacturing, education, environmental, social services, mental health, tourism, and social justice sectors.

Listen to "Lunchtime with Lesser" on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Pod-Bean, and wherever you get your podcasts.



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Eric P. Lesser

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One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

Ladue promoted to VP/ Regional Manager at PeoplesBank

HOLYOKE — PeoplesBank has announced that Clare Ladue of Palmer was promoted to Vice President and Regional Manager for the Holyoke region.

Ladue has more than 25 years of financial services and banking experience, having served in banking center management, administration, and commercial lending. She previously served as Banking Center Manager for the Hadley Banking Center and was promoted to Assistant Vice President, Regional Manager, in 2019.

In addition to completing course work at the New England School of Financial Studies, Ladue earned a Commercial Lending Certificate from the Massachusetts Bankers Association.

Ladue's volunteer service includes serving as an executive committee member of the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce and on the Town of Ware 250th Anniversary Committee, as well as volunteering for the West Springfield Partners for Education, Baystate Mary Lane Walk of Champions, Junior Achievement, Rays of Hope and Lorraine's Soup Kitchen.



PATHFINDER I from page 1

what we need to do with other students immediately. Right now, it could take four or five days to get the test back, but we will do it on the spot. It's absolutely incredible."

Duda also said it's going to help the school continue to remain open for in-person learning while continuing to protect students and staff.

The tests will be available in the building's nurse's office and that two new designated medical areas have been set up where students will be assessed.

Duda said he is confident in both Dunaj and Braden to help keep the staff and student in Pathfinder safe.

"Both nurses that we have right now are registered nurses with a combined experience of over 30 years, some of which involved military experience and are really impressive," said Duda. "We have two incredible staff members that are elite in every way."

Dunaj also it is important to highlight that Pathfinder's first line of defense is relying on the parents to keep their children home if they are feeling sick.

"That's something very important," said Dunaj. "We want the students to stay home if they're not feeling well."

Duda said the school plans to begin administering the tests as needed as soon as the kits arrive.

For more information on Pathfinder, to access their 2021/2022 school year application and more, visit pathfindertech.org.

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Don't be cold this winter

Settlement provided fuel assistance for local residents

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

PALMER — Residents of Palmer and surrounding areas Bondsville, Depot Village, Thorndike, and Three Rivers could be eligible for the Palmer Natural Gas Fuel Assistance Program.

Community Development Director Sarah Szczebak said this is the first time the fuel assistance program has been offered and that it is a result of an opportunity provided by State Attorney General

Muara Healey's office.

"They received settlement money from Eversource and turned it into a grant opportunity for all the communities across the Commonwealth, provide fuel assistance to natural gas customers," said Szczebak. "We saw the announcement about the grant, decided to go for it and we were successfully funded."

The settlement Healey refers to is \$1.5 billion Boston-based Eversource paid after a class-action lawsuit was brought over the utility's response to Tropical Storm Isaias.

Szczebak said the town received \$15,000 as its portion of the settlement and the money is available until Decem-

ber 2021.

"I'm assuming we'll spend the money [for assistance] well before then of course," said Szczebak.

The natural gas fuel assistance program will be applied to residents' natural gas heating bills, including helping applicants catch up with past due bills and providing a credit for current and future gas charges. The maximum amount each applicant will be awarded is \$500.

Each applicant's pre-tax gross household income can't exceed \$47,850 to be eligible for financial assistance.

Szczebak said residents should consider taking advantage of this opportunity, especially considering the economic

fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think with the way the economy is right now and the hardships that COVID has caused for so many people, when we saw this opportunity we thought, 'we definitely have to apply for if there's a way we can help out some of the residents in town with financial struggles,'" Szczebak said.

"I hope this will make a difference for people who have natural gas and need a little extra help paying their bills this year."

To learn more about the program and apply, call Szczebak at 413-283-2614 or email szczebak@townofpalmer.com.

Baystate doctor: Vaccine encouraging, but testing still important

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

PALMER — Although the Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19 is beginning to roll out, people who have any coronavirus symptoms, such as a cough, fever or chills, are encouraged to get tested for the virus.

Baystate Wing Hospital Assistant Dr. Benjamin Freda said now that the nation is facing another surge of the virus and Baystate Health is providing care in a more aware environment, it's even more important to get tested.

"If you think about the first wave of this and how everybody stayed away from the hospital, that was not a good thing and

maybe led to some delays in care," Dr. Freda said.

"I think testing makes everybody feel more comfortable to embrace the hospital as a place to take care of their problems."

Even though protocols such as social distancing and face masks are urgently recommended, Freda said it will not wipe out the need to get tested.

"It might make us need to test a little bit more often, because some of the symptoms that we're probably going to see from a vaccine might be a little like some infection type symptoms such as fever and muscle aches. I think it's going to highlight the need to really have good access to testing, above

and beyond what our original thinking was like to identify people to quarantine."

Anyone who would like to get tested is advised to call their primary care provider.

Baystate spokesperson Michelle Holmgren said afterward, they can go directly to the health system's website and make an appointment. Or, call the Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center.

"Calling gives you the opportunity to speak to somebody and let them ask you some key questions, such as 'are you short of breath?' and other things you



Benjamin J. Freda

have going with you that could be risk factors for more severe diseases," said Freda.

"I like that as the best option."

Freda went on to say that testing truly is the cornerstone of identifying any health-related issues and for making decisions about quarantine and contact tracing.

"If you're sick, get tested," said Freda.

"I think you can't summarize any better than that, because the quicker you know you have this, the quicker you'll know whether or you're not able to be a candidate for some of the

new therapies. We have some therapies that are even used for outpatient now, monoclonal antibody tests that are being rolled out at Baystate this week and different treatments that are available now, that were not available in the initial search. By getting tested, you can quarantine and we can contact trace and it literally is the difference between this virus expanding or at least slowing down enough so that when our vaccine rolls out, we can quash it."

For more information on Baystate's services and sign up to receive monthly updates from the experts at Baystate Health and more, visit baystatehealth.org.

Ludlow Police Dept. hosting food drive Saturday

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

LUDLOW — This Saturday, Dec. 19, the Ludlow Police Department will be hosting its first annual Christmas Food Drive to assist the Open Pantry Community Services Inc. in Springfield.

Ludlow Police Chief Daniel Valadas said the reason behind this initiative is because he was interested in making a "civic donation" during the holiday season.

"I wanted to have an annual police department event," said Valadas. "I thought that addressing food needs in our greater Springfield area" would be a community service that benefits many area people in need.

"We'll be out there by eight a.m. and be in front of our building. People can just pull into the parking lot. They don't even have to get out of the car. We'll just take the donation."

Valadas also said they will have a vehicle they want to fill up and drive to the pantry when the event is over, at 1 p.m.

"For me it's so rewarding," said Valadas.

"It's an excellent endeavor when you can help people and I think it's something that we should look at as much as possible. I look forward to meeting people as they come in and drop off non-perishable good. People need help and we're in the business to help people, and that's what we want to show people. As police officers, we care."

Heather Clark, interim director of Open Pantry Services Inc., said the pantry is typically closed on Saturdays but will be open Dec. because of the food drive.

Terry Maxey, executive director of the pantry, said the COVID-19 pandemic has created an even more urgent need for food donations.

"It is very important to us and the community and addresses the need," Maxey said.

Once the food drive is finished, Clark said, pantry staff members will sort through the donated items and get them ready for clients.

"Pre-COVID times, we were allowing our clients to shop through the aisles for what they really needed," Clark said.

"Because of the social distancing protocol, we'll put the items on our shelf and we prepack boxes for our clients. That way, there's less contact. Clients will come in go through our intake process and they'll receive their package."

Potential clients who do not reside in Springfield will be welcomed to visit the pantry as long as they can provide verification of the number of people in their household.

"As long as they are residents of Massachusetts, they will be able to receive services," Clark said.

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Delivery snacks



Courtesy photo
Julie Midura and her husband Tom set up a table with snacks, drinks and hand sanitizer for delivery people who make stops in her neighborhood.

by Julie Midura

My husband Tom and I were getting into our car yesterday when a mail truck pulled up at the foot of our driveway. The driver hopped out of the truck and ran up the driveway to our front porch. He reached into the large red plastic bin filled with assorted chocolate bars, granola bars, Gatorade, and water bottles, grabbed what he wanted, and yelled to us, “Thank you so much!”

The man told us that our home is well known among the drivers, and not just those from his company. He has friends that drive for the competition, and the word has spread. He shared that the drivers look forward to delivering packages on our street so that they can stop to grab a snack from our porch as they drive their route. As he ran back to his truck with a Snickers bar and a bottle of water in hand, the smile on his face was contagious.

Here’s the kicker: he didn’t have a delivery for us yesterday.

I should probably tell you that the driver wasn’t being presumptuous; We have told the drivers that we encounter to let their coworkers know that all are welcome to stop at our house for a snack, even if they don’t have a delivery for us.

We have been providing treats for drivers for several years during the holidays, but I believe that they need it more than ever this year. Since so many people are shopping online due to the pandemic, delivery drivers are working their tails off. I believe that a heartfelt expression of appreciation may be all that they need to brighten their day.

And if there was ever a time when people’s days need brightening, this is that time.

I have noticed that the joy that is usually so prevalent at this time of year has been dimmed due to the pandemic. The people I encounter – with faces hidden behind masks – seem less joyful than in years past. There is a wariness in people’s eyes.

There is division, sadness, fear, worry, and anxiety permeating our lives. A friend expressed it perfectly, saying “I feel as though I am always ‘on edge’- and not only me, but the people around me.”

And who can blame us? In one way or another, each and every one of us is being affected by this virus; if not physically, then emotionally, mentally, or financially. This is the hardest time that most of us have ever lived through.

So how can we fight back against a virus that is creating so much angst and heartbreak among so many people?

First, we need to remember that we are all in this together. We need to be kind to the store clerk as we wait in line. We need to be patient with the voice on the other end of the phone. We need to smile at the people we pass – even when that smile is hidden behind a mask- and even when we don’t feel like smiling. We need to be compassionate, helpful and supportive to those we meet in our daily lives.

And second; we need to spread joy. Oh, how we need to spread joy!

The driver who walks away from my home with a spring in his step may treat the next person he encounters with more kindness. And so the joy continues to reach more and more people as each one passes it forward.

I urge each of you to brighten your little corner of the world by spreading joy in whatever way that you can. Be creative. Use your imagination. Ask yourself what you can do to put a smile on a stranger’s face today. And then continue to do it well into the new year.

I’ll start with a little something on my front porch.

May all of your days be merry and bright!

Julie Midura is a resident of Ludlow and a regular contributor to the Register.



Poinsettias appreciate extra TLC

Every Christmas the poinsettia takes the stage, front and center, in grocery and box store displays. The deep red bracts lure buyers to make them part of their holiday decorating. Pretty? For sure, but without proper care, the plant won’t have a chance past New Year’s Day. Let’s learn what we can do to keep this favorite looking its best throughout the holiday season and then some.

It’s important that you start off with a healthy plant. Choose a poinsettia with dark green foliage all the way to the soil line. Color should completely cover the bracts on the upper portion of the plant. Avoid plants whose flowers (located in the center of the bracts) show pollen. If pollen is evident, the plant is old. Be wary of those that are displayed in plastic or paper sleeves or even those that are elbow to elbow. Poinsettias need room to spread out, and the longer they are cramped, the more likely it is that their quality will be impacted. Wilted plants are also best avoided, as this may indicate more than dry soil alone.

Poinsettias are cold sensitive. Temperatures under 50 degrees for even a few minutes can damage the plant. Therefore, insert into a bag or protective sleeve for the ride home from the store and do not leave in an unheated car while you run other errands! Once home, position the poinsettia in a location where it will receive indirect light for at least six hours a day. Avoid drafts, warm or cold, and place far enough away from windows to prevent the foliage from touching cold glass. Chances are if you are comfortable inside, your poinsettia will be as well. Temperatures from 65 to 70 degrees during the day to around 55 at night will extend its life.

Check the plant often to see if it needs water. If the soil is dry, water until droplets leak through the drainage holes in the pot. Saucers shouldn’t accumulate water. Dump the excess out after each watering so the plant won’t reabsorb it and become waterlogged. Soil that remains soaking wet is likely to cause root rot. A visual indication of this irreversible disease is curled, wilting foliage and

bracts. Hold off on fertilizing the plant while it is in bloom.

It’s unfortunate that few people keep their poinsettias past the holiday season. When I was a kid my Mom succeeded at getting hers to bloom again the following Christmas. Here’s what to do if you’d like to try it: In early April cut back the plant to eight inches. Fertilize with an all purpose house-plant fertilizer once a month. New growth should appear by the end of May. After the danger of frost has passed, move the plant outdoors. Continue to water but increase fertilization to every two weeks. Pinch plants in late June or early July to promote bushy growth. At this time you may also wish to

repot the poinsettia. Select a pot one size larger, filling around the root ball with a good potting soil. Bring the plant indoors as temperatures fall.

The poinsettia is photoperiodic, and long nights of uninterrupted darkness encourage it to bloom. In greenhouses, growers go to great lengths to withhold light, as even small amounts can delay or stop the plant from setting bud. At home, putting the plant in the closet for 14 hours each night is your best bet. Most people get on a 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. schedule beginning on Oct. 1, and continue it for eight to 10 weeks until color shows on the bracts. Night temperatures should be no higher than 70 degrees or flowering may be delayed.

While my Mom achieved colorful bracts, the plant itself was a bit leggy and the foliage not so green. Perhaps more fertilizer and a harder pinch would have made our experiment more successful. Give it a try yourself and maybe you will have even better results!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

IN THE GARDEN



Roberta McQuaid
Columnist

SOCIAL SECURITY COLUMN

Will my U.K. pension affect my Social Security?

By Russell Gloor
Guest columnist

Dear Rusty: I lived and worked in the United Kingdom prior to coming to the U.S. at age 45, which qualified me for a U.K. State Pension worth the equivalent of about \$740 U.S. dollars per month. Since moving to the U.S. I have contributed to the U.S. Social Security system for 14 years and my estimated U.S. Social Security benefit is \$1,643 per month. I have heard about something called “WEP” and must be honest and say I don’t fully understand. Can you provide some advice or references so I can understand what happens to these sums when I retire? I don’t have any other pension income, so understanding these numbers is important. FYI, I hold both U.S. and U.K. passports and will retire in the U.S.A. Signed: Blessed from the UK

Dear Blessed: The “WEP” provision you refer to is known as the “Windfall Elimination Provision.” It affects anyone who is eligible to collect Social Security benefits, but who also has a pen-

sion from another entity (corporation, public agency, or foreign country) which did not participate in the U.S. Social Security program (meaning that SS FICA payroll taxes weren’t paid during that employment). WEP will reduce your U.S. Social Security benefit by using a special formula to compute your benefit amount. Generally, the WEP reduction is determined either by the number of years of substantial Social Security covered earnings that you have, or the WEP maximums (one of which is that your U.S. Social Security can’t be reduced by more than half of your non-covered pension). With less than 20 years paying into the U.S. system, you will incur one of the maximum WEP reductions.

Something else important to understand is that the current estimate you have from Social Security doesn’t include the WEP reduction. That estimate assumes that you will continue to earn at your current level until you reach your full retirement age. You haven’t shared your birthdate, but from your email I assume you are

now about 60-years-old. I

f you were born in 1959, your full retirement age (FRA) for U.S. Social Security purposes is 66 years and 10 months (if you were born after that your FRA is 67, and if you were born before that subtract 2 months for each year prior to 1959). Your FRA is when you will get your “full” Social Security benefit. If you claim before that (age 62 is the earliest you can claim) your benefit will be reduced (even before WEP), and if you wait beyond your FRA you’ll earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) which will increase your benefit amount. DRCs stop at age 70.

Based upon what you’ve told me, I believe that your WEP reduction will probably be limited to one of the maximums, either half of your monthly U.K. pension, or the maximum for your “eligibility year” (2022?). We don’t yet know what the standard maximum WEP reduction for 2022 will be, but for 2020 it is \$480. That is the most that your Social Security benefit could normally be reduced. But if your U.K. pension is about \$740

U.S. Dollars, then your maximum reduction should be about \$370, because the WEP reduction can’t be more than half of your non-covered (U.K.) pension. So, your U.S. Social Security benefit of \$1,643 will most likely be reduced by about \$370 to about \$1,303. You will need to contact the U.K. pension system to see if any of your U.K. pension will be offset by your U.S. Social Security benefits.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Letters to the Editor

COVID impacts annual drive

The Palmer Lions Club will be unable to have our annual toy and food drive this year due to Covid-19 shutting down our collection and distribution centers.

We thank all who have helped us in the many years past. We are however still collecting donations for our Helen and Wilfred Rondeau Scholarship fund. Those willing to donate please send your contribution to The Palmer Lions Club, Post Office Box 133, Palmer Ma. 01069-0133.

Norman Guerette
Secretary
Palmer Lions

Thank you for making Warm Drive a success

The Three Rivers Fire Fighter’s Association Ladies Auxiliary would like to thank everyone who so kindly donated to our annual Keep Warm Drive. This was our most successful drive yet.

Together, we collected 18 bags of clothing, both homemade and donated, for the Palmer/Monson Family Network.

Thank you all once again and have a safe and happy holiday season.

Three Rivers Fire Fighter’s
Association Ladies Auxiliary

‘Tyburskis’ Bakery is an inspirational local treasure

I have lived in the Palmer area for my entire 63 years of life. Some of my most nostalgic memories include playing Little League baseball, neighborhood wiffle ball games, Sunday afternoon street hockey games at the former Quaboag Elementary School, backyard acorn fights, family rides to “ooh” and “aah” at Christmas lights, and devouring a pizza from Villa Nova or Happy Valley to name just a few.

These were the simple pleasures of a child from a hardworking blue collar family. But my most cherished memory were Sundays when our family would go to the Polish mass at Sts. Peter and Paul church where I served as an altar boy with Fr. Skoniecki or Father Ziggy presiding. Mass couldn’t end soon enough for me because I knew Tat and Mom would drive us to the Palmer Airport for an hour to watch the many planes take off and land. With our stomachs rumbling, the short distance to Thorndike would seem to take forever as we anticipated Countryside Bakery or more affectionately known as Tyburskis Bakery. This is the reason for this letter of thanks.

I went there recently on a Saturday morning for a loaf of their famous rye bread. Entering the bakery and being hit by the aroma brought me back to those days of carefree innocence and simple fun. Walking back to my pickup with that still warm loaf of rye bread caressed under my arm, I paused for a second and closed my eyes to enjoy the feeling of everlasting bliss and longing. This must have been the feeling Charlie had when he won the Golden Ticket in the movie “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.” When I arrived home, I didn’t want to get out of the cab because by then it was flooded with that outstanding rye bread aroma and recalling fond memories.

Thank you Tommy Tyburski, your father, Charlie, and your entire family for the hard work and early morning wake ups to prepare the delicious pastries and various breads. Thank you for your tireless dedication to the family business.

You are a true inspiration to small local business entrepreneurs.

Tom Zelazo
Palmer

Election letters to the editor welcome

The Journal Register welcomes readers to participate in this year’s election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Journal Register, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to mharrison@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday’s newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call editor Michael Harrison at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor’s Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Journal Register.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and guest columns between 500-800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must confirm authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

Please send opinions to:
The Journal Register
Letter to the Editor
24 Water St.,
Palmer MA 01069,
or by e-mail to:
mharrison@turley.com

The submission deadline for consideration is Monday at noon.

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PILOT programs undermined by lack of funding and tax ruling

BOSTON – A report issued today by State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump pointed out the commonwealth’s payments in lieu of taxes, or PILOT, program for state-owned lands is underfunded and disproportionately disadvantages smaller, rural communities in favor of larger, wealthier communities. Additionally, the report finds that state laws governing taxes paid to cities and towns by solar power generators are outdated, confusing for both municipalities and the solar operators, and may slow the adoption of solar technologies.

PILOT programs help municipal governments replace some or all revenue lost from certain state property tax exemptions, such as those associated with non-profit organizations, recreational areas and properties owned by the commonwealth. This is the first report from the Office of State Auditor in 19 years to look at PILOTs for state-owned land and the first ever to review the solar energy facility PILOT program.

“These PILOT programs were designed to help communities with significant state-owned land holdings and to promote solar development, but chronic underfunding of the former and rulings from the Appellate Tax Board on the latter have blunted their impact,” Bump said. “There are simple steps lawmakers can take to get these programs back on track: provide adequate funding, implement provisions to protect communities with declining property values, and clarify that solar tax exemptions are designed for residential and small commercial installations. At a time when municipalities are facing historic financial challenges, I encourage the Legislature to act quickly on these recommendations.”

SOL PILOT program
The SOL PILOT Program provides reimbursement payments to municipalities for tax-exempt land owned by the commonwealth. In the last 20 years, the program’s funding has not met statutory obligations to reimburse municipalities. Since fiscal year 2009, the SOL PILOT Program’s appropriation has remained flat, at close to \$30 million, meanwhile property tax collections across the state have increased by approximately 57 percent during the same period. Bump’s study estimates that if the Legislature were to fully fund the SOL program, it would need to increase this allocation to at least \$45,650,194.

Quote from Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments: “The State-Owned Land PILOT Program represents a pact: cities and towns will house and provide critical services for untaxed properties that benefit the public, such as universities, recreational lands, and government buildings, and in exchange, the state government will ensure they are fairly compensated,” said Linda Dunlavy, executive director of the Franklin Regional Council of Government. “But years of underfunding of this critical program have strained this agreement and local budgets. With COVID-19 challenging local government budgets like never before, now is the time for the commonwealth to finally fully fund this important program.”

SOL PILOT funding
Under the SOL PILOT Program’s funding formula, reimbursements are partly based on each municipality’s state-owned land value. Bump’s study notes that communities with decreasing, stagnant, or slowly increasing property values have seen reductions in their PILOT payments. As a result, communities in the eastern part of the state, where property values have consistently risen, have seen their SOL PILOT reimbursements increase, while reimbursements to communities in the western part of the state have generally decreased.

Bump urges the Legislature to add a hold harmless provision to the SOL Pilot Program to ensure communities with property values that are declining or growing at below average rates do not see their reimbursements reduced.

Quote from Sen. Adam Hinds:
“The implementation of PILOT for state-owned land has resulted in an unequal system that is detrimental to small towns. I appreciate that the Auditor is putting forth clear and concrete findings and recommendations that we can use to reform or improve the implementation of the program in our commonwealth,” said state Sen. Adam Hind.

Confusion stymies solar development
Under state law, municipalities can enter into PILOT agreements with energy generation companies, including solar energy producers. Such agreements provide predictable revenue for the communities and security to generation facilities by allowing them to anticipate future tax payments. However, decisions by the Appellate Tax Board have allowed large commercial solar facilities to avoid paying personal property taxes on their equipment by taking advantage of an exemption on solar equipment that was designed to promote residential and small commercial solar installations. These rulings have created confusion for local officials

and may result in slower rates of solar development in the future. The study calls on the Legislature to clarify the solar property tax exemption and the tax status of solar facilities that may be eligible to enter into a PILOT agreement.

State Sen. Michael Rodrigues and State Rep. Jeffrey Roy have brought forward bills to address these problems by clarifying the solar tax exemption and resolving issues resulting from the ATB rulings.

“The Auditor’s report confirms the challenges local officials and municipalities have been having administering the solar property tax exemption law and the need for legislative change,” said Lane Partridge, an assessor in Concord. “These provisions were enacted many decades ago and are outdated in terms of technology or current municipal practices. We will continue to work with all stakeholders to address this issue and update the law.”

The Office of the State Auditor’s Division of Local Mandates produced the study. In addition to responding to requests from local governments about potential unfunded mandates, DLM also produces Municipal Impact Studies, such as this one, that provide deep analysis of aspects of state law that have significant fiscal impacts on municipalities.

The park can be found online at <https://spark.adobe.com/page/jiefgxrT-97M8g/>.

In the classroom

Monson resident completes intensive research project

WORCESTER — Erik Wegge of Monson, a member of the class of 2022 majoring in mechanical engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, was a member of a student team that recently completed an intense research project titled Designing a Method to Capture, Insert, and Retrieve Digitized Archives at St. Mary’s Parish in Panama at Panama City Panama.

At WPI, all undergraduates are required to complete a research-driven, professional-level project that applies science and technology to addresses an important societal need or issue. Nearly 90% of students typically complete a project in collaboration with partners in communities across the country and around the world, through the university’s 50-plus project centers.

Students usually travel to the project center for seven-week terms; this fall, however, due to the global coronavirus pandemic, they worked remotely, using video conferencing and other technology to complete their projects. A signature element of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI, the project-based curriculum offers students the opportunity to apply their scientific and technical knowledge to de-

velop thoughtful solutions to real problems that affect the quality of people’s lives-and make a difference before they graduate.

“The WPI project-based curriculum’s focus on global studies brings students out of their comfort zones to apply their knowledge to solve real problems for people in communities around the globe,” said Professor Kent Rissmiller, interim dean of the WPI Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division.

“Students have the opportunity to learn about a different culture, from the way people live and work to the values they hold to the foods they eat – all valuable perspectives for surviving and thriving in today’s global marketplace. They also learn the meaning and magic of teamwork; make a real and meaningful difference; and gain a competitive edge for any resume, or graduate or professional school application.”

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute
WPI, a global leader in project-based learning, is a distinctive,



Erik Wegge

top-tier technological university founded in 1865 on the principle that students learn most effectively by applying the theory learned in the classroom to the practice of solving real-world problems. Recognized by the National Academy of Engineering with the 2016 Bernard M. Gordon Prize for Innovation in Engineering and Technology Education, WPI’s pioneering project-based curriculum engages undergraduates in solving important scientific, technological, and societal problems throughout their education and at more than 50 project centers around the world.

WPI offers more than 50 bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs across 14 academic departments in science, engineering, technology, business, the social sciences, and the humanities and arts. Its faculty and students pursue groundbreaking research to meet ongoing challenges in: health and biotechnology; robotics and the internet of things; advanced materials and manufacturing; cyber, data, and security systems; learning science; and more. To learn more, go to wpi.edu.

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On Dec. 5, Santa's Elves for Palmer hosted its first event, Stuff the Cruiser at the Palmer Police Department, to collect toys for local children.

Despite the harsh weather conditions, Santa's Elves for Palmer's Stuff the Cruiser event received an overwhelming amount of support.

Because of the success of Stuff the Cruiser, several children will now have gifts to look forward to this Christmas.

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

PALMER – Santa's Elves for Palmer, with help from the community, has been busy making sure this Christmas will be remembered for more than the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group sprang up in response to the economic fallout of the pandemic. Organizer Lori Chiaccia, with help of Emily Skoczylas and Lorinda Baker, hosted completed a successful Dec. 5 “Stuff the

Cruiser" event that collected gifts for local children who otherwise might go without.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Palmer Police Department, the three members of Santa's Elves for Palmer collected food and toy donations to be distributed to families in need.

The support the event received, according to Chiacchia, was nothing short of amazing.

"I can't speak good enough about it," said Chiacchia.

"The community really came and helped out."

She also said the group received support from members of the Palmer Lion's Club, Palmer police officers, the Palmer Ambulance Services and more. All during a weekend featuring freezing rain, snow and biting wind.

"It was extremely busy," said Chicchia.

"Granted terrible," she said.

"I put a post on Facebook stating although the weather is bad, if you feel like donating, please come down and do it early before it gets

bad. We got down there at 9:30 a.m. and people were coming.”

Chicchia also said there were two cruisers that were filled with toys. She also said Jay Demore, co-owner of Demore's Automotive, brought a vehicle to help collect the donated toys as well as breakfast for the participants.

Skoczylas, who is also the manager of the Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force and helped identify families in need, was also grateful for the turnout of the event.

"It was absolutely incredible,"

said Skoczylas. "Every child will have multiple gifts under the tree, ranging from baby dolls to Hot Wheels, to family board games."

She also couldn't say enough of the generosity and community spirit of Palmer.

"There is a community that is willing to help out," Skoczylas said. "All you have to do is just ask."

She also said the support she has received since beginning Santa's Elves for Palmer kept her going as the pandemic continues to disrupt lives and "just knowing that

children will be happy and believe in the magic of Santa Claus” makes her happy.

Although she is still receiving requests for help through Santa's Elves for Palmer, Chiacchia said there had to be a cutoff date to accommodate delivery logistics.

"People are still asking for help and unfortunately, I must turn them away," she said.

"Christmas is next week it's a little too late. Nothing can get shipped in the right amount of time anymore."

SPRINGFIELD – In partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, all 33 Big Y Pharmacy and Wellness Centers are preparing to administer the COVID-19 vaccines once approved and available for distribution. This partnership is being established in anticipation that one or more COVID-19 vaccines will be authorized and approved for use in the United States as part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Strategy for COVID-19. This initiative by the HHS with pharmacies across the United States is part of the federal pharmacy program aimed to further increase access to the vaccines. The partnership has deemed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns in retail and grocery stores as be-

ing crucial public health partners for increasing access and convenience of COVID-19 vaccines.

Big Y's pharmacy team currently provides seasonal flu and other routine vaccines. They plan to participate in any additional training to ensure the safe administration of the vaccine along with educating their customers about the process.

According to Charles L. D'Amour, president and CEO, "We are proud to partner with the United States government in order to provide free COVID-19 vaccines to our customers. When a vaccine is available, our pharmacy teams will be ready to administer them as per CDC guidelines."

Big Y Foods, Inc. is one of the largest independently owned

supermarket chains in New England. Big Y operates 85 locations throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut including 71 supermarkets, Fresh Acres Market, Table & Vine Fine Wines and Liquors and 12 Big Y Express gas and convenience locations with almost 12,000 employees. Big Y has been recognized by Forbes as a Best-in-State Employer in Massachusetts and Connecticut, as well as 2018 Employer of Choice by the Employers Association of the Northeast. Founded in 1936 by brothers Paul and Gerald D'Amour, the store was named after an intersection in Chicopee, Massachusetts where two roads converge to form a "Y".

REGION – Hampshire County Sheriff Patrick Cahillane is alerting residents to a phone scam being perpetrated in the Pioneer Valley.

The scam, commonly known as “phone spoofing” or “caller ID spoofing,” is when a scammer uses caller ID spoofing technology to impersonate the phone numbers of local businesses or government agencies in attempt to acquire money or some sort of personal information.

On Monday, Dec. 7, Cahillane said his office had received several calls from area residents reporting that they had received calls from a person identifying themselves as an employee of the Hampshire Sheriff's Office seeking money due to court charges, and then requesting payment via gift cards.

“The Hampshire Sheriff’s Office will never, never, call private citizens and demand payment or accept payment of any kind over the phone,” Cahillane said. “If you receive such a call, the best tactic is to simply hang up. Anyone receiving such a fraudulent call might also consider contacting their local police department, or notifying my office at 413-584-5911. The FBI website – www.fbi.gov – also has information about how to avoid such scams.”

Here are some additional tips from the Better Business Bureau on what to do if a scammer calls:

- Hang up – don't press any buttons and, if you received a voice-mail, don't call the scammer back. We all like to have the last word, but

returning the phone call may just give the scammer information they can use.

- Don't trust caller ID – scammers have technology that lets them display any number or organization name on your screen.

- Never give out any financial information – if you did not initiate the call, do not provide bank account, credit card or Social Security numbers over the phone unless you have thoroughly done your research and verified the caller.

"The duty of the Hampshire Sheriff's Office is to protect public safety," Cahillane said. "We want everyone to stay safe, and to remember that my office will never make these kinds of phone calls."

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SOCCKER

Theriault hits 100 points, headed for Fairfield



Madalyn Theriault works out at practice prior to the abbreviated 2020 season. File photos

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—Several graduates of Palmer High School have played for a Division 1 college athletic team. Junior Madalyn Theriault will be joining that elite group in the fall of 2022.

"I've verbally committed to Fairfield University for soccer," said Theriault during a recent zoom interview. "It feels so nice knowing that I'll be attending a great college and will be playing soccer for a Division 1 team, which is a huge honor for me."

The Fairfield women's soccer team, who are members of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, did not play any matches this past fall because of COVID-19.

The Stags advanced to the MAAC Championship Finals last



Despite the challenges of playing in a modified environment, Theriault shined in her junior year.

year where they lost to top-seeded Monmouth. Fairfield head coach David Barrett was selected as the 2019 MAAC Coach of the Year.

"During the recruiting process, the Fairfield coaching staff not only valued me as a soccer player, but they also valued me as a person," Theriault said. "Coach Barrett is a great soccer coach and I can't wait to play for him. The Fairfield campus is also beautiful."

The last member of the Palmer girls varsity soccer team, which is coached by Nick Marciano, to play college soccer at the Division 1 level is Madison Stahelski. She'll be a senior at Sacred Heart University next year.

"Maddy is someone that I looked up to as a role model when I was younger," Theriault said. "I aspire to be just like her."

THERIAULT | page 8

ICE HOCKEY

No locker rooms, scrums in hockey modifications

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION — The parking lots at Olympia Ice Center and Fitzpatrick Rink could be very crowded this winter with students being forced to change outdoors as part of the modifications made to ice hockey for the 2020-2021 season.

High school guidelines from the office of Energy and Environmental Affairs required locker rooms to be closed at ice hockey arenas.

The only reason the locker rooms can be used is for players to use the bathroom and sinks.

"Participants must wear-in/wear-out clothes or dress in the parking lot or other designated area," the guidelines state.

The change is to limit close contact among teammates due to locker rooms being very congested spaces with a lot of pads and equipment taking up even more space.

One change for hockey versus other sports is the ability for players to wear gaiters on the ice. Typically, face coverings for players and fans alike in most sports requires a mask that has loops that go over the ear, securely covering the mouth and nose. Hockey players are allowed to wear gaiters,

which were viewed as less secure by some. Gaiter will be allowed for hockey players provided they are multi-ply.

One of the tougher parts to comply with is the fact only 20 players will be allowed to dress for the game, and some extended bench areas will be needed for both teams in order to social distance enough. Typically, 22 players are allowed on the roster for varsity games. Only three coaches will be allowed on benches for games, though that is close to average for most hockey teams.

Having more than one player in the penalty box will also be a

new challenge as only one player is allowed in the penalty box at a time. According to the guidelines, other spaces must be designated for players to serve penalties.

"One person in the penalty box at a time," the guidelines state. "If another player must be in a designated 'auxiliary box/location,' they must be social distanced either outside the penalty box or in the bench area as close to the penalty box as possible; when possible the second and or subsequent penalized players must move to the penalty box upon the exit of the previously pe-

HOCKEY | page 8

SOCCKER

Kolodziey steps down as Pioneers GM

Mutiny GM Ferrara takes helm

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW — Along with being the longtime boys' varsity soccer coach at Ludlow High School, Greg Kolodziey has also been the General Manager of the Western Mass. Pioneers for more than ten years.

Kolodziey recently stepped down as the Pioneers G.M. due to personal reasons.

"I'm excited about some new challenges that lie ahead," Kolodziey said. "I hope to spend more time on the soccer field doing what I enjoy most, coaching kids, and assisting and encouraging them to be good students so once they get through the graduation line, they are ready to do good, positive things in life."

Kolodziey is still planning to continue coaching the boys' varsity soccer team at his alma mater in the fall of 2021. He also coaches a Western United Pioneers squad.

Joe Ferrara, who like Kolodziey is a lifelong resident of Ludlow, has been named as the new General Manager of the Western Mass. Pioneers. He's also the owner of the New England Mutiny and is the Commissioner of the United Women's Soccer League.

"The Pioneers have a great support staff and the Mutiny also have



Greg Kolodziey, longtime general manager of the Western Mass. Pioneers, has stepped down.



Kolodziey will remain as coach of Ludlow High School.



File photos

The New England Mutiny and Western Mass. Pioneers share a home stadium now. Mutiny owner Joe Ferrara was named the Pioneers GM.

a great support staff, so I think I'll be able to run both organizations without very much difficulty," Ferrara said. "The biggest challenge right now is that we still don't know what's going to be happening next spring."

The Pioneers and the Mutiny, who both play their home matches at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, didn't play any matches in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're hoping to have a season next year, but we're planning for several different scenarios," Ferrara said. "A normal regular season, a shortened season, a season without fans, or no season at all."

Before Kolodziey stepped down from his position, he and Ferrara shared the same office at Lusitano Stadium.

"I do have a lot of respect for Greg and his family," Ferrara said.

PIONEERS | page 8

AUTO RACING

Seekonk Speedway announces events for next season

SEEKONK — Seekonk Speedway is looking ahead to a fresh, exciting 2021 season. On Dec. 3, the Massachusetts third-mile announced the full schedule of events for 2021 -- one that will mark the 75th anniversary of full-time racing. Seekonk Speedway looks forward to welcoming fans back to the grandstands safely, as the recent vaccine announcements for COVID-19 are welcomed news and talks continue with the state of Massachusetts.

Multiple major events headline the 2021 schedule -- including the ISMA Supermodified and Boston Louie NEMA Midget and NEMA Lite Races (June 9), the annual \$10,000 to win Open Wheel Wednesday headlined by the Tri Track Open Modified Series (June 30), the inaugural \$10,000 to win

Bay State Summer Classic with the PASS Pro Stocks (July 28), the annual DAV Fall Classic (Sept. 24 to 25) and the Haunted Hundred, headlined by Tri Track (Oct. 23).

The slate includes 18 Saturday Night Showdowns -- showcasing Seekonk's premiere Pro Stocks, Everett's Auto Parts Late Models, Helger's South Coast Power Equipment Sportsman and Chaz Auto Body Sport Trucks. It will also see the return of the Fast Friday Series -- with 16 events for the Nick's Pit Stop Legends Cars, Helger's Pure Stocks, Sport 4's and Seekonk Grand Prix Bandoleros. Seekonk is pleased to welcome back all divisions and their sponsors, while adding Chaz Auto Body to the team of division sponsors.

With COVID-19 shutting down Saturday night competition and



Woody Pitkat was a big winner at the Sunoco World Series event.

Thrill Shows in 2020, and only Fast Friday drivers hitting the track due to regulations from the state of Massachusetts to stop the spread

of the virus, it's only fitting that the 75th anniversary be celebrated in 2021. Seekonk's Fast Friday classes ran a 10-race slate in front

of no spectators in 2020, however, they continued to showcase youth talent and some of the best racing Seekonk offers through the track's YouTube channel.

"Our schedule includes a bit of something for everyone who is a race fan in the region," Ed St. Germain, Director of Business Development at Seekonk Speedway, said. "We're excited for all of our special events, but above all, we can't wait to welcome back our great fans and get our premiere Saturday night divisions back on the track in 2021."

The season opens with two Test and tune sessions on April 10 and 24, while opening weekend returns on Saturday and Sunday, May 1-2. Saturday will include the Classic Car Show and Swap Meet fans have come to love, with burn out drags and race practice. On Sunday, May

2, the engines fire in a race competition for the first time with the Pro Stocks, Late Models, Sportsman, Trucks and Spectator Drags. The season rolls from this starting point in May all the way through October, with more than 45 events planned.

Of the touring divisions included, two of them will visit Seekonk more than once -- with the prestigious Tri Track Open Modified Series bringing their top Modified talent for Open Wheel Wednesday (June 30) and the Haunted Hundred (October 23). Both races have a large purse and always attract the best Modified talent in the region. New for 2021, the American Canadian Tour (ACT) will also join the Haunted Hundred, along with the return of the Pro All Star Series (PASS) Super Late Models.

SEEKONK | page 8

Figure skating event cancelled due to COVID-19

WILLIAMSTOWN — This decision was based on the Bay State Games overriding concern to protect the health and safety of all participants, coaches, judges, volunteers, and spectators. Other factors that lead to this decision include state guidelines limiting public events, the uncertainty of whether the Williams College Lansing Chapman Rink will open in 2021, current limitations on use of Williams College facilities by outside groups and protocol re-

quirements from national figure skating governing bodies.

"It is with great disappointment that we announce we will be unable to host the Bay State Games figure skating competition in Williamstown in 2021," said Bay State Games Executive Director Kevin Cummings. "For the last 35 years, it has been a privilege to bring skaters and their families to Berkshire County for this longtime winter tradition. While our participants have always enjoyed trav-

elling to the region for the event which has had a positive economic impact for local hotels and restaurants, many factors related to the pandemic prevent us from returning in the Winter of 2021."

Bay State Games will continue to evaluate the possibility of hosting a live skating event in Massachusetts later in 2021 or as part of the Summer Games should the impact of the pandemic and restrictions improve. Potentially hosting virtual skating events lat-

er in the year is also under consideration. Future event options for 2021 are being investigated as federal, state, and local board of health protocols continue to be monitored. Bay State Games remains hopeful it can return to Berkshire County for 2022 events and beyond.

Updated information regarding the status of Bay State Games figure skating events will be posted on the Bay State Games website as soon as it is confirmed.

SEEKONK ■ from page 7

All three races as part of the season-finales will be 100 laps, matching the Haunted "Hundred" name.

PASS, New England's premier touring Super Late Model division, will return to Seekonk for three events overall in 2021 -- including the big \$10,000 to win race on Wednesday, July 28. PASS will also help headline the two races that will close the season -- the annual Fall Classic, with a 150-lapper on Sept. 25, and the Haunted Hundred.

The track welcomes back five Thrill Shows to the schedule -- with a show for Memorial Day (May 29), Independence Day (July 3), Mid-Summer Spectacular (July 31), Labor Day (Sept. 4) and the Pumpkin Smash (Oct. 9). Note that all Thrill Shows are on Saturday night's -- giving weekly competitors the night off. There will also be a special event on Sunday, Aug. 8 -- headlined by the return of Monster Trucks and the first ever Spector Drag race -- where drivers will double up and actually race for multiple laps together on the track, instead of just in a one-on-one format.

As part of the weekly slate, track champions will be crowned in all nine divisions. Championship battles for all divisions except the Pro Stocks will include as part of the DAV Fall Classic weekend on Sept. 24 and 25, as the Fall Classic

returns to a two-day race format, with a practice session on Thursday night, Sept. 23. The Pro Stock title battle wraps on Saturday, Sept. 18, on Ocean State Oil Night, allowing drivers to compete with PASS at the Fall Classic.

The Phil's Propane Triple Crown Series returns after a year off due to COVID, with a three-race, extra distance, set of races for all of Seekonk's divisions. The Pro Stock Triple Crown Series races will be 60 laps, while the Late Models will shift to 45 laps. The Sportsman and Sport Trucks remain at 35, while the Pure Stocks, Sport 4's and Legends Cars are set for 30. As always, the Seekonk Grand Prix Bandolero division runs 15 laps for all of their events, but will also crown a Triple Crown champion.

Phil's Propane Triple Crown Series Dates:

Pro Stocks: June 5, July 16, Aug. 21

Late Models: May 22, June 26, Aug. 21

Sportsman: May 15, June 19, Aug. 21

Sport Trucks: May 8, June 12, Aug. 21

Legends Cars: June 25, July 30, Aug. 20

Pure Stocks: June 18, July 16, Aug. 20

Sport 4: June 11, July 23, Aug. 20

Bandolero: June 4, July 9, Aug. 20

The Everett's Auto Parts Di-

among Races are on the schedule, with three special events for the Pro Stocks and the Late Models. All of these races will be 50 laps for both divisions, including a night where both classes run the 50's on Saturday, Aug. 14.

Everett's Auto Parts Diamond Race Dates:

Pro Stocks: June 26, July 24, Aug. 14

Late Models: June 19, July 17, Aug. 14

The Troy City Tactical Spectator Drag Series is back, with drivers set to compete in a 10-race series starting on May 2 and ending on Oct. 9. In the middle, drivers will thrill fans in front of both Saturday night crowds and Thrill Show fans.

The Power 5 Series will return for Helger's Southcoast Power Equipment Sportsman, with five races set for 30 laps instead of 25, with a bit of extra purse money on the line courtesy of Helger's. Sponsorship is available for Power 5 races for the remainder of Seekonk's Saturday night divisions.

The schedule also includes the special returns of Military Night, Youth Sports Night, the STAR and NEAR Antique Racer divisions, R.I. Shriners Night (with Trike Races), Fans on Parade, Scout Night, the Pit Party, Phil's Propane night, Helger's Southcoast Power Equipment night and the annual Fan Appreciation night sponsored by Everett's Auto Parts.

Seekonk looks forward to wel-

coming back a long list of supporters for the 2021 season, and can't thank those who stepped up in 2020 enough. See below for a full list of 2021 sponsors to this point:

Everett's Auto Parts, Helger's Southcoast Power Equipment, Phil's Propane, Ocean State Oil, Solar Therapeutics, PEPSI, T. Morreshead Landscaping, Sunoco Race Fuels, American Racer, Elmwood Dodge, Bristol Toyota, First Ford, Troy City Tactical, Shriners Children's Hospital, Roger Williams Zoo, Precision Harley Davidson, Columbus Energies, Chick Fil A, Seekonk Grand Prix, Chaz Auto Body, Nick Lascuola Racing, Lambert Brothers Racing, Spring Villa Memory Care, Viper Graphics, Nick's Pit Stop, Nat's Racing Engines, KC's Burger Bar, Miller Brewing, Coors Light, WCTK Cat Country, Four Town Farms

The full schedule is subject to change.

Seekonk Speedway will release additional updates about the 2021 season when available. For more information, follow the track on all social media channels and visit seekonkspeedway.com. Please stay tuned for ticket release dates for advanced purchase.

Fans should keep a lookout for new episodes of the Seekonk Speedway podcast series over the winter months, giving you a step back in time, a view of the present and a look into the future.

THERIAULT ■ from page 7

Theriault, who has been selected as an All-State soccer player during the past three seasons, will not be the first person in her family to play a sport in college.

Her mother, Amanda, graduated from Westfield State University and she's the all-time leading scorer for the women's basketball team's. Amanda is also a member of the Westfield State Athletic Hall of Fame and is entering her second season as the Palmer girls varsity basketball coach.

Maddy's father, Kris, is a member of the Fitchburg State University Athletic Hall of Fame. He holds the NCAA Division 3 championship record in the javelin throw.

"My parents are my biggest supporters and they've helped me so much during my whole recruiting process," Maddy said. "I'm glad that I have their athletic genes. I am also very thankful for the support of my grandparents (Karen and Richard).

Maddy's younger sister, Charlotte, is following in her footsteps as an athlete.

Maddy Theriault put her name into the Palmer history books on Nov. 9 when she became the first member of the girls' soccer team to reach 100 career points.

"That was definitely a memorable day for me," she said. "I'm so glad that (junior) Ava Denault assisted on my milestone goal. We've been a dynamic duo since we were in the second grade."

Theriault will enter her senior season on the soccer team with 82 career goals and 23 career assists for a total of 108 career points.

"One of my goals is to score 100 career goals in high school," Theriault said. "I won't be able to achieve that milestone without the help of my teammates."

If Palmer does play a full slate of games next year, scoring 18 goals shouldn't be a ma-



Theriault achieved her 100th career point against Pathfinder on Nov. 9

ajor problem for Theriault. She scored 29 goals as a freshman and 30 goals as a sophomore.

Her junior season was a little shorter because of COVID-19.

"I'm so glad this wasn't my senior year," she said. "We played fewer games, but we were thankful to even have a season. I'm hoping that we can qualify for the postseason tournament next year. I love playing soccer for the high school team with all of my friends."

Besides being an outstanding soccer player, Theriault has also excelled on the basketball court during her high school career.

"I do really enjoy playing both soccer and basketball," Theriault said. "My true passion is for soccer and I take it very seriously. I just want to thank all of my teammates and coaches who have helped me along the way."

Two of Theriault's Pioneer Valley soccer coaches were Dave Denault and Celso Sandoval.

"All of my friends played on the Pioneer Valley soccer team with me," she said. "It was just a great atmosphere and it was a lot of fun playing soccer for that team."

Theriault joined the Scorpions, which is an Elite Clubs National League (E.C.N.L.) soccer club located in Taunton, four years ago.

"The Scorpions play against teams from around the country. I also attend showcase tournaments," Theriault said. "All of the players in the ECNL are very good. I'll probably have to adjust to playing soccer at the Division 1 level, but I think it probably won't be very difficult for me."

Theriault's Scorpions coaches are Nick Rugnetta and Evan Burokas.

"Nick Rugnetta and Evan Burokas have helped me become the soccer player that I am today," Theriault said. "They've taught me things about soccer, which I never knew about. It should really help me in college."

Burokas played college soccer at Merrimack College. He's also a member of the Western Mass. Pioneers.

"Everytime you jump a level in play, the game becomes that much faster," Burokas said. "In college, there are 30 players vying for 11 starting spots and 18 roster spots day in and day out. Maddy will need to improve her awareness and ability to read the game a bit faster to be an impact player at the next level. She's a competitor, so I have no worries about her."

Turleysports

Athlete of the Week

Hannah Flagg
Monson High School

The Monson senior had two goals and three assists in the Mustangs' shortened 2020 season.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

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PIONEERS ■ from page 7

"I would like to meet with him about the Pioneers."

The Pioneers, who had a very successful 2019 campaign, are coached by Federico Molinari.

"Federico is a very good soccer coach," Ferrara said. "I'm looking forward to working with him on a daily basis."

The Pioneers assistant coaches are Dennis Gomes, Jay Willis, and John Voight.

The Pioneers are members of the USL 2 League and compete in the Northeast Division of the Eastern Conference.

The USL 2 League G.M. meetings are normally held in Florida in December, but they're going to be held virtual in January. The 2021 schedule will be released at that time.

The Pioneers qualified to play in the U.S. Open Cup last year, which was canceled. They're hoping to play in the 2021 Open Cup tournament.

"It'll be great if we do play in the Open Cup next year," Ferrara said. "It gives the smaller clubs the chance to play with the big boys."

The Mutiny had played games in several different communities before coming to Ludlow in 2019.

"Being able to have the Mutiny play home matches at Lusitano Stadium is very special to me," Ferrara said. "I played games there when I was in high school and the atmosphere is great at the Stadium."

The Mutiny celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2019 and Ferrara has

only missed one match since he formed the team in 1999.

After taking a year off from soccer for the first time in many years, Ferrara is ready to watch both of his soccer teams play next summer.

"Last summer was the first time in 20 years that I wasn't involved in soccer and it was refreshing. Soccer seasons can be a grind at times, especially when you're not succeeding on the field," Ferrara said. "I'm ready to go now and the players are also ready to get back on the field again."

While the 2020 United Women's Soccer League regular season was canceled, a couple of showcase tournaments were held in Michigan and Florida last summer.

The Mutiny, who are members UWS Eastern Conference, do have several players from Western Mass. listed on their roster.

"Having the local soccer players play for the Mutiny really means a lot to me," Ferrara said. "It's nice to have players from Granby, Monson, Agawam, and Ludlow on the team. We're represented by ten communities in Western Massachusetts. There are a lot of talented high school girls' soccer players from this area."

Several Mutiny players have been signed with N.W.S.L. and a few have played for professional teams in Europe.

Jill Serafino is the Mutiny General Manager and Jeb Booth is planning on returning as the Mutiny head coach in 2021.

HOCKEY ■ from page 7

nalized player."

There is in option for subsequent players to serve penalties on their bench if necessary.

The biggest change fans will notice with play on the ice is the elimination of "scrums." These are plays typically when multiple players go after a loose puck in a corner of the ice.

They usually take place on either side of the goal.

The e guidelines

only allow for one player from each team to be involved in a scrum. Once a third player joins, play must be stopped by the referee. Play also will be stopped if the scrum lasts more than five seconds.

High schools played fall sports in geographically-formed leagues in order to limit contact between too many schools. The plan will be similar for hockey, but leagues will look different because there are fewer teams. There were also no restrictions placed on co-op programs and they will be allowed to play.

PALMER ■ from page 1

low income housing, we should focus on senior living, which can still help low income seniors without putting an added burden on schools and focus more on middle class homes built on one to two acre lots, especially if the town is going to get the rail stop.

Ryan Dominick asked, "Do you think that the reason this population has not grown is because the tax rate is ranked 336 out of 344 in all of Massachusetts?"

Time to go small?

Someone mentioned that a new trend for senior citizens is moving into tiny homes and that some communities are setting aside space for tiny home neighborhoods. Town officials agreed it's something to consider.

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DEATH NOTICES

Marie J. Berry-Holmberg (Nichols), 92
Died: Dec. 4, 2020
Funeral Services are private

David G. Ramsey, 76
Died: Dec. 9, 2020

Jeannette, T. Lambert (Harpin), 92
Died: Dec. 11, 2020
Funeral Services are private

The Journal Register
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

O B I T U A R I E S

Marie J. Berry-Holmberg, 92

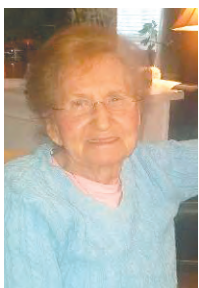
MONSON — Marie J. (Nichols) Berry-Holmberg, 92, passed away Monday, Dec. 14, 2020.

Marie was born in Monson to the late John J. and Josephine L. (Verlotta) Nichols. She attended Monson Schools and raised her family here. For many years she worked at Zero Corp. in Monson and then Smith and Wesson in Springfield. In 1999, she moved to West Yarmouth and enjoyed many years on the Cape. While Marie was on Cape she enjoyed working for the Barnstable County School District as a cafeteria worker in a small elementary school. At the age of 80 she decided to retire.

Marie recently returned to Palmer to live with her daughter Suzanne. Marie was a Gold Star Mother and along with her

husband Tom, were active members of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Moose Club and Elks Club.

Marie was predeceased by her first husband, Robert G. Berry, in 1990 and her second husband, Thomas A. Holmberg in 2015. She leaves her children, Robert Berry Jr. of South Hadley, Suzanne LeClair of Palmer, James Berry of Tulsa, Okla., Melody Gustafson and her husband Bruce of Monson, Mark Berry and his wife Martha of Monson; a sister, Dolores Potts of Palmer, Arlene Cherry of Tennessee; brothers, John Nichols of Palmer, Anthony Nichols of Florida; eight grandchildren, Jason, Deanne, Monica, Rachel,



Bruce Jr, Lisa, Samantha, Jacob and 15 great grandchildren. Marie was predeceased by a son Alan Berry, killed in action in Vietnam in 1970, and also was predeceased by her sisters, Betty Madelle, Beverly Smith and Colleen Warnock.

All funeral services will be private and have been entrusted to Lombard Funeral Home of Monson. In lieu of flowers please consider a memorial donation in Marie's name to Wounded Warrior Project PO Box 758516 Topeka, KS 66675-8516, woundedwarriorproject.org/donate/donation or a charity of one's choice.

For online condolences visit lombardfuneralhome.com.

Jeannette T. Lambert, 1928-2020

MONSON — Jeannette, T. (Harpin) Lambert, 92, passed away Dec. 11, 2020, surrounded by love of family.

Jeannette was born in Springfield to the late Michel and Malvina (Bardier) Harpin. Jeannette was a graduate of American International College, where she received a Bachelors of Science in education. She continued her education and received a Masters in Education from New York University.

Jeannette was a resident of Monson from 1970 until moving to Belchertown to be with family in 2015. She was a Teacher at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School for over 20 years and retired 1994. Jeannette was a communicant of St. Patrick's Church in Monson, where she was also a Liturgical Reader, Eucharistic Minister and taught CCD. She was also active with many community organizations.

She was a past treasurer

of the Monson Free Library, past co-chairman of the Monson SALT committee, former director of the Monson Open Pantry, past member of the Human Rites Committee at Monson Developmental Center, and a member of the Monson Garden Club. She was also an avid Red Sox fan and could often be found walking nature trails with her late husband by her side.

Jeanette was predeceased by her loving husband, Donald R. Lambert, in 2014. She was also predeceased by her six siblings: Edna, Paul, Frederick, Romney, Edward and Lorraine. She leaves her children: Michel R. Lambert of Green Bay, Wis.; Donna R. Picard (and her partner David Ferreira) of Naperville, Ill.; Jean Paul Lambert (and his wife Beth) of Norfolk, Va.; Marie A. Haley (and her husband



Chris) of Monson and Carole A. Richard of Belchertown; eight grandchildren, Daniel, Shannon, Joseph, Sarah, Jenna-Nichole, Cassandra, Jean-Paul and Jacob; six great grandchildren, Elizabeth, Amber, Scarlett, Chloe, James

and Amelia.

All funeral services are private. A memorial Mass will be scheduled at a later date.

In lieu of flowers please consider a memorial donation in Jeannette's name to: St. Patrick's Restoration Fund, PO Box 473 Monson, MA 01057; Monson Free Library, 2 High St., Monson, MA 01057 or Monson Open Pantry, PO Box 566, Monson, MA 01057.

Lombard Funeral Home of Monson has been entrusted with the arrangements. For online condolences please visit www.lombardfuneralhome.com.

David G. Ramsey, 1944-2020

MONSON — David G. Ramsey, 76, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020, surrounded by love of family in his home.

David was born in Columbus, Miss., on Sept. 26, 1944, to the late George H. and Eileen C. (Nix) Ramsey. He was an avid gardener who enjoyed planting, nurturing and sharing everything he would grow. He was a loving and devoted father, grandfather and partner.

David leaves his daughters, Lisa Ramsey (Lenny) of Palmer, Laurie Tyburski (Kenny) of Monson, Aja Riesberg (Jamie) of North Carolina; his partner, Elaine Carlin of Monson, and five grandchildren, Emily, Elizabeth, Ella, Ty and Jase.

A graveside service was held Tuesday, Dec. 15, at Hill-



crest Cemetery in Monson. Family and friends were asked to gather at the gravesite.

Lombard Funeral Home of Monson has been entrusted with the arrangements. For online condolences please visit lombardfuneralhome.com.

Police/Fire

Police Logs

PALMER

The Palmer Police Department responded to eight arrests or summons for arrest from Dec. 8 to Dec. 15. Those arrested will appear at the Palmer District Court and are innocent until proven guilty.

Saturday, Dec. 12

Davin M. Kendall, 23, of 69 North St., Three Rivers, was arrested at 11:39 a.m. on North Street in Three Rivers on charges of violation of a harassment prevention and a warrant.

Sunday, Dec. 13

Morrie Lt. Heilman, 22, of 2089 Oak St., Three Rivers, was arrested at 9:49 a.m. on Sykes Street in Three Rivers on charges on oper-

ating a motor vehicle with a revoked license and having no inspection sticker.

Kenneth PJR. Frazier, 37, of 96 Main St. Apt. #B, Warren was arrested at 2:49 p.m. around Foster Street and Thorndike Street on a warrant.

MONSON

The Monson Police Department responded to four arrests or summons for arrest from Dec. 6 to Dec. 12. Those arrested will appear at the Palmer District Court and are innocent until proven guilty.

Sunday, Dec. 6

Cara McGee, 24, of 6242 Bigelow Commons, Enfield, was arrest-

ed at 5:02 a.m. on charges of operating under the influence of liquor; possession of an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle and state highway parking.

Monday, Dec. 7

Catherine Marie Reed, 37, of 45 Elm St. Apt. #D, Monson, was arrested at 5:37 a.m., was arrested at 5:37 a.m. on a WMS warrant.

Saturday, Dec. 11

A juvenile arrested was made at 11:54 p.m. on charges of speeding rate of speed exceeding posted limit, negligent operation of a motor vehicle and person under 21 possessing liquor.

Fire Logs

PALMER

The Palmer Fire Department responded to a total of six calls from Dec. 10 through Dec. 12.

On Thursday, Dec. 10, at 2:34 a.m., the department responded to a motor vehicle accident on Ware Street. The department returned to service at 3:04 a.m.

On Friday, Dec. 11, at 7:19 a.m., the department provided medical assistance on Beacon Drive. The department returned to service at 7:49 a.m.

On Friday, Dec. 11, at 2:39 p.m., the department responded to a carbon monoxide detector malfunction on Buckland Street. The department returned to service at 3:11 p.m.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, at 10:52 a.m., the department responded to a citizen complain on South Main Street. The department returned to service at 11:16 a.m.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, at 3:19 p.m., the department responded to a carbon monoxide detector malfunction on Buckland Street. The department returned to service at 3:39 p.m.

On Monday, Dec. 14, at 7:07 p.m., the department responded to an alarm activation on Thorndike

Street. The department returned to service at 8:02 p.m.

THREE RIVERS

The Three Rivers Fire Department responded to a total of six calls from Dec. 11 to Dec. 13.

On Friday, Dec. 11, at 10:30 a.m., the department responded to the report of a possible building fire. No incident was found on arrival and the department returned to service at 10:35 a.m.

On Friday, Dec. 11, at 4:20 p.m., the department responded to a motor vehicle accident on Three Rivers Road. The department returned to service at 6:00 p.m.

On Friday, Dec. 11, at 6 p.m., the department responded to a fluid spill on Three Rivers Road. The department returned to service at 6:10 p.m.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, at 10:49 a.m., the department responded to an unauthorized burning on Main Street. The department returned to service at 11:00 a.m.

On Sunday, Dec. 13, at 9:13 p.m., the department responded to an EMS incident on Palmer Street. The department returned to service at 9:21 p.m.

On Sunday, Dec. 13, at 9:13

p.m., the department responded to an EMS incident on Pineview Street. The department returned to service 9:45 p.m.

BONDSDVILLE

The Bonds ville Fire Department responded to two calls from Dec. 8 through Dec. 14.

On Friday, Dec. 11, at 10:29 a.m., the department provided to mutual aid to Springfield Street in Three Rivers for a report of smoke coming out of a building. It was later determined that there was no issue and the call was cancelled at 10:32 a.m.

On Monday, Dec. 14, at 11:38 a.m., the department conducted a investigation for an issue with a wood stove/chimney on South High Street. The department returned to service at 12:05 p.m.

MONSON

The Monson Fire Department responded to one Fire Call and 19 EMS calls from Dec. 7 through Dec. 13.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, at 4:05 p.m., the department responded to a report of a telephone pole sparking on Palmer Road. The department returned to service at 4:54 p.m.

Westfield Homes Cat Project needs donations

WESTFIELD – While National Cat Day is Oct. 29, the Westfield Homeless Cat Project celebrates all that is feline each and every day. WHCP is seeking food, supply and monetary donations during these uncertain times. With the cancellation of fundraisers and public apprehension over COVID 19, the project has grave concerns as to the financial effect this may have on small no-kill rescues such as WHCP. Cat food donations, especially Fancy Feast and Friskies, as well as cat and shelter supplies such as litter, towels/blankets, household cleaners and paper products and monetary donations would be most appreciated. And volunteers are always welcome.

WHCP never denies a cat or kitten in need and the public's generosity will allow it to continue their efforts. Donations can be dropped off or sent to 1124 East Mountain Road, West-

field, MA 01085. Don't have the time or inclination to visit the shelter? Check out the WHCP's Amazon wish list at <https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2UX2QSYXRP3OG>. As always, WHCP's thanks everyone for their support.

People can also support WHCP and do their shopping at the same time through Amazon Smile. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. However, when shoppers buy items on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of

the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of the shopper's choice. Please go to www.smile.amazon.com and designate the Westfield Homeless Cat Project as the preferred charity.

Please note the projects adjusted adoption clinic hours: Thursdays from 5 to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 3:00 p.m. Please note that all safety protocols are followed, including facial coverings and hand sanitization. For more information please contact Denise at denisesinico@hotmail.com.

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Country Bank donates to Behavioral Health Network

WARE – Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, donated \$10,000 to Behavioral Health Network (BHN) to assist them with the Under 5 Thrive program and the Kid Stop Child Center based in Ware. BHN serves nearly 50,000 people annually in 40 locations throughout Western Massachusetts by assisting them with various needs, such as, mental health, children's services and addiction and recovery.

Over the past eight years, Country Bank has donated a total of \$315,000 to support the indispensable work BHN offers to the region. "Thank you so much for this important contribution to our

children's services in Ware. This will go a long way towards helping local families with resources and assistance to keep their children safe and healthy in the coming year," stated Susan West, senior vice president of BHN.

"The pandemic has certainly placed a strain on our local communities; child care has been one area that has been hugely impacted and has left families trying to balance child care needs with work schedules. It has not been easy for anyone throughout the last several months and we are so grateful to have these places right here in our community to help support local families. The essential programs that BHN provides aligns perfect-

ly with Country Bank's mission to help improve the livelihood of those in our communities," stated Shelley Regin, senior vice president, marketing of Country Bank and Advisory Board member at BHN.

To learn more about the various programs offered through Behavioral Health Network and Valley Human Services, people may visit <https://www.bhninc.org/>.

Country Bank is a full-service mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton and Worcester.

WAYFINDERS

from page 1

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For more information about Way Finders programs, call 413-233-1600, email housingsupport@wayfinders.org, or visit wayfinders.org. To fill out an application, go to wayfinders.org/covid.

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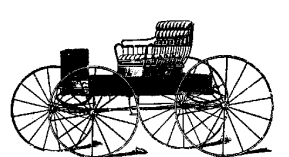
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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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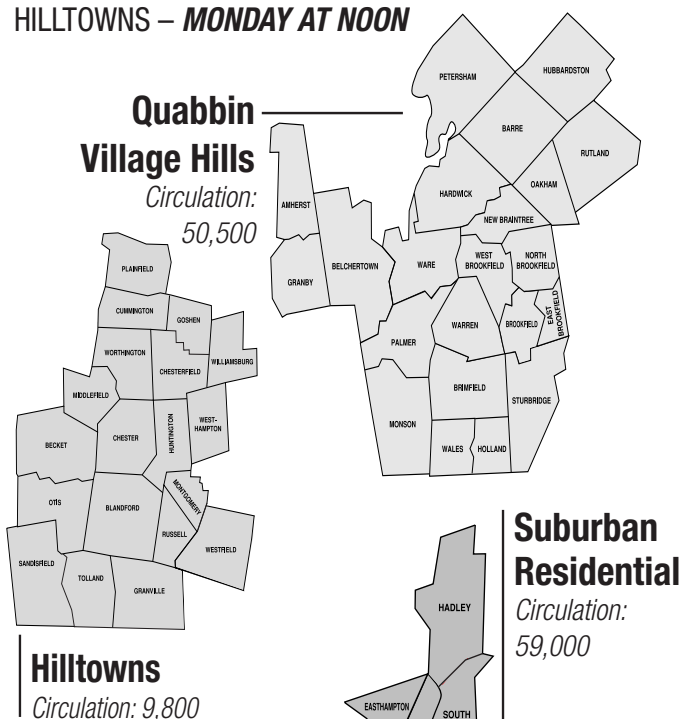
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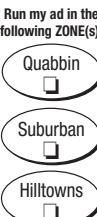
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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT PETITION TO FORECLOSE TAX LIEN [seal] No. 19TL001145

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, and to

Sophie Wanciak, deceased, formerly of Seymour, New Haven County, in the State of Connecticut; David P. Wanciak, nor or formerly of Milford, New Haven County, in the State of Connecticut; Randy A. Wanciak, now or formerly of Media, Delaware County, in the State of Pennsylvania; Melanie Balint, now or formerly of Milford, New Haven County, in the State of Connecticut; or their heirs, devisees, legal representatives, successors and assigns:

Whereas, a petition has been presented to said Court by the Town of Holland, in the County of Hampden, and said Commonwealth, to foreclose all rights of redemption from the tax lien proceedings described in said petition in and concerning a certain parcel of land situate in said Holland, in the County of Hampden, and in said Commonwealth, bounded and described in said petition as follows:

A parcel of land with any buildings thereon, approximately 9675 Square Feet located and known as Pine Crest Dr shown on the Town of Holland Assessors Records as Parcel Identifier R13/D/08 and being the premises recorded in book 3445 on page 298 in the Hampden Registry of Deeds. Assessed to Wanciak Philip P. & Sophie Supposed Present Owner C/O Wanciak Randy

If you desire to make any objection or defense to said complaint you or your attorney must file a written appearance and an answer, under oath, setting forth clearly and specifically your objections or defense to each part of said complaint, in the office of the Recorder of said Court in Boston (at the Courthouse located on **Three Pemberton Square, Room 507 in Boston, MA 02108**), on or before the **first day of February in the year two thousand and twenty-one**.

Unless an appearance is so filed by or for you, your default will be recorded, the said complaint will be taken as confessed and you will be forever barred from contesting said complaint or any judgment entered thereon.

And in addition to the usual service of this notice as required by law, it is ordered that the foregoing citation be published forthwith once in the Journal Register a newspaper published in Palmer.

Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Esquire, Chief Justice of said Court, this tenth day of December in the year two thousand and twenty.

Attest with Seal of said Court.

Deborah J. Patterson Recorder

Plaintiff's Attorney:
Amy J. Megliola, Esq.,
Siddall & Siddall PC,
315 Main Street,
Suite 210,
Springfield, MA 01103
Tel: (413) 732-3600
12/17/2020

PALMER PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 11, the Palmer Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Monday, January 4, 2021 at 7:20 PM** in the Town Hall Administration Building, 4417 Main Street, Palmer, MA.

The applicant, Patricia L. Mead Wheelock, is seeking the renewal of her home occupation Special Permit as required under section and 171.81 A.(13). of the Palmer Zoning Ordinance for the continued operation of a reiki and acupressure business. The property is located at 54 South St. Three Rivers, MA and is also known as Assessors Map 70 Lot 112.

A copy of the application may be inspected on the Planning Department website at www.townofpalmer.com/planning or at the Planning Department office at Town

Hall by appointment only.

Anyone interested in more information or wishing to be heard on the application can contact the Planning Department at 283-2605 or appear at the time and place designated above.

This notice shall also be posted on the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association's (MNPA) website (<http://masspublicnotices.org>).

Michael Marciniak
Chairman
12/17, 12/24/2020

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT Docket No. 20 SM 001107 ORDER OF NOTICE

TO: Amy B. Forkey, Jason A. Forkey and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (*et seq.*):

Nationstar Mortgage LLC d/b/a Mr. Cooper claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Monson, numbered 7 Circle Drive, given by Amy B. Forkey and Jason A. Forkey to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, acting solely as a nominee for TD Banknorth, N.A., dated December 30, 2005, and recorded in Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 15610, Page 335, as affected by a Loan Modification dated February 17, 2013, and recorded at said Registry of Deeds in Book 19855, Page 379, and further affected by a Loan Modification dated September 4, 2014, and recorded at said Registry of Deeds in Book 20529, Page 585, and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have

filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before 1/18/2021 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, GORDON H. PIPER Chief Justice of this Court on 12/11/2020
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson Recorder
12/17/2020

LEGAL NOTICE
MONSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Under the requirements of M.G.L. Chapt. 131, s.40, the Monson Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Wednesday December 30, 2020 at 7:20 P.M. REMOTELY**. Under consideration is a Request for a Determination of Applicability to determine if the work associated with the construction of a SFH a septic system, driveway, lawn area, and tree clearing, is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. Property is designated as Lot 1 Munn Rd. The Applicant and property owner, Leif Ronaldson, filed the request.

Login: <https://zoom.us/j/93461517169?pwd=SUJwR3I2bHAYZzdGT0ZQeFlwRXVTTzZ09>
Dial: 1.646.558.8656
Meeting ID: 934 6151 7169
Password: 878803
Submitted by:
Monson Conservation Commission
12/17/2020

LEGAL NOTICE
MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue of and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by John Wojnilowicz and Kevin Brooke to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, acting solely as a nominee for NovaStar Mortgage,

Inc., dated April 13, 2006 and recorded in Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 15828, Page 529 (the "Mortgage") of which mortgage The Bank of New York Mellon, f/k/a The Bank of New York as successor in interest to JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. as Trustee for NovaStar Mortgage Funding Trust, Series 2006-2, NovaStar Home Equity Loan Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-2 dated January 17, 2019 and recorded at said Registry of Deeds in Book 22530, Page 162, for breach of conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same, the mortgaged premises located at 2 Barker Street, Three Rivers (Palmer), MA 01080 will be sold at a Public Auction at **11:00 AM on January 13, 2021**, at the mortgaged premises, more particularly described below, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

A certain tract of land with buildings thereon situate on the westerly side of Barker Street in the Village of Three Rivers, in said Palmer, bounded and

described as follows:
Beginning at a stone in the westerly side of said Barker Street and in the southerly line of a private way fifty (50) feet wide known as Chudy Avenue, said bound being fifty (50) feet S. 8° 14' W. measured along the westerly side of said Barker Street from an iron pin at the southeasterly corner of land now or formerly of one Mowduk; thence

S. 8° 14' W. along the westerly side of said Barker Street eighty (80) feet to a point; thence N. 83° 58' W. along land now or formerly of Frank Chudy one hundred (100) feet; thence

N. 8° 14' E. along the southerly line of said Frank Chudy eighty (80) feet to the southerly line of said Chudy Avenue; thence

S. 83° 58' E. along the southerly line of said Chudy Avenue one hundred (100) feet to the place of beginning.

described as follows;

Beginning at a stone in the westerly side of said Barker Street and in the southerly line of a private way fifty (50) feet wide known as Chudy Avenue, said bound being fifty (50) feet S. 8° 14' W. measured along the westerly side of said Barker Street from an iron pin at the southeasterly corner of land now or formerly of one Mowduk; thence

S. 8° 14' W. along the westerly side of said Barker Street eighty (80) feet to a point; thence N. 83° 58' W. along land now or formerly of Frank Chudy one hundred (100) feet; thence

N. 8° 14' E. along the southerly line of said Frank Chudy eighty (80) feet to the southerly line of said Chudy Avenue; thence

S. 83° 58' E. along the southerly line of said Chudy Avenue one hundred (100) feet to the place of beginning.

Together with the right, in common with Frank Chudy, his heirs and assigns to use, for all the purposes of a public way, said private way known as Chudy Avenue.

Together also with the right to empty and discharge sewage from the conveyed premises into the sewer pipe of said Chudy in said Chudy Avenue and the right, in common with said Chudy, his heirs and assigns, to convey said sewage through said pipe as now laid in said Chudy Avenue, Barker Street and land now or formerly of one Musgrave to the town sewer in Belchertown Road; together with the right to enter upon said lands for the purpose of maintaining and relaying said sewer pipe, in the event that Frank Chudy, his heirs or assigns, shall neglect to repair or maintain the same.

For mortgagor's title see deed recorded with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 15828,

Page 527. See also deed recorded at said Registry of Deeds in Book 20156, Page 456.

The premises will be sold subject to any and all unpaid taxes and other municipal assessments and liens, and subject to prior liens or other enforceable encumbrances of record entitled to precedence over this mortgage, and subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, reservations and conditions of record and subject to all tenancies and/or rights of parties in possession.

Terms of the Sale: Cashier's or certified check in the sum of \$5,000.00 as a deposit must be shown at the time and place of the sale in order to qualify as a bidder (the mortgage holder and its designee(s) are exempt from this requirement); high bidder to sign written Memorandum of Sale upon acceptance of bid; balance of purchase price payable by certified check

in thirty (30) days from the date of the sale at the offices of mortgagee's attorney, Korde & Associates, P.C., 900 Chelmsford Street, Suite 3102, Lowell, MA 01851 or such other time as may be designated by mortgagee. The description for the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

The Bank of New York Mellon, f/k/a The Bank of New York as successor in interest to JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. as Trustee for NovaStar Mortgage Funding Trust, Series 2006-2, NovaStar Home Equity Loan Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-2

Korde & Associates, P.C.
900 Chelmsford Street
Suite 3102
Lowell, MA 01851
(978) 256-1500
Wojnilowicz, John and
Brooke, Kevin, 13-011709
12/17, 12/24, 12/31/2020

Early Deadlines

for all PUBLIC NOTICES...

to run the week of December 21-25, 2020:

- **Thursday, Dec. 17 at NOON** The Register, Sentinel, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times, Agawam Advertiser News, Quaboag Current
- **Friday, Dec. 18 at Noon** Barre Gazette, Country Journal, Ware River News The Journal Register
- **Monday, Dec. 21 at noon** Town Reminder, Chicopee Register and The Holyoke Sun

Happy Holidays!

Happy New Year!

to run the week of December 28 - January 1, 2021:

- **Wednesday, Dec. 23 at noon** The Register, Sentinel, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times, Agawam Advertiser News, Quaboag Current, Barre Gazette, Country Journal, Ware River News The Journal Register
- **Monday, Dec. 28 at noon** Town Reminder, Chicopee Register and The Holyoke Sun

EARLY DEADLINE For All Advertising & CLASSIFIEDS

To celebrate **CHRISTMAS**, the Advertising Deadline will be **NOON - FRI., DEC. 18** for the week of **Dec. 22-25**

To celebrate **NEW YEAR**, the Advertising Deadline will be **NOON - WED., DEC. 23** for the week of **Dec. 29-Jan. 1**

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visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Baystate offers COVID holiday precautions

SPRINGFIELD – “The risks of contracting the coronavirus leading up to Christmas and afterwards are even greater than they were for Thanksgiving because of all the traveling, shopping and parties associated with the holidays,” said Dr. Armando Paez, chief, Infectious Disease Division, Baystate Medical Center.

“The greatest gift you can give someone this holiday season is to protect them from getting the virus,” he added.

Dr. Paez noted that the world has already been gifted with an early present, several vaccines to fight the coronavirus.

“While we expect great promise from these vaccines, the difference they will make in our return to some semblance of normality will not be felt until sometime next year, perhaps not until mid-year or the fall season,” he said.

Yet, despite the good news about the vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is forecasting that there could be an estimated 9,500 to 19,500 deaths the week of Christmas alone.

But, once again as they did for Thanksgiving, the CDC is advising against travel for the upcoming winter holidays, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Las Posadas.

“Travel may increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others,” cites the CDC as cases are rising, hospitalizations are increasing and deaths are increasing.

For those who must travel, the CDC recommends being tested for COVID-19 before and after their trip. They advise getting a test one to three days before travel and another three to five days after travel, as well as reducing nonessential activities for seven days after travel. And for those who do not get tested, the CDC recommends reducing nonessential activities for 10 days after travel.

The message hasn’t changed much when it comes to partying for Christmas, whether in someone’s home or at the office, if people must, the smaller the better and outdoors if possible (not always possible in New England). And, of course, if people do party, wear a mask and socially distance, noted Dr. Paez.

In Massachusetts, according to an order from Gov. Charlie Baker, indoor gatherings at private residences are limited to 10 people and outdoor gatherings at private residences are limited to 25 people.

“To be honest, it’s going to be hard to socially distance in a party atmosphere and enjoy it at this same time. Also, If just one person isn’t wearing a mask, that’s a problem. And, where alcohol is involved, you’re much more likely to let your guard down where safety is concerned,” said Dr. Paez.

As for celebrations with family and friends, the CDC says the safest way to celebrate the holidays is “at home with people you live with.”

Visit the CDC’s website, cdc.gov, for a full article on “Holiday Celebrations and Small Gatherings,” which explains the risks of holidays gatherings and offers tips on how to stay safe.

As Thanksgiving approached, the CDC recommended not going shopping in crowded stores, a suggestion which still stands as coronavirus surges are even greater now than around Thanksgiving.

Also, the White House COVID-19 Task Force recently noted the country is “at a very dangerous place and the COVID risk to all Americans is at an all-time high,” stating “everyone over 65 with significant health conditions should avoid public places if possible and wear a mask when leaving the house.”

“As much as possible, use curbside pickup if shopping or shop online,” said Dr. Paez.

“These are hard decisions to make around the holidays at a time when family is everything and getting together is so important. But, there is light at the end of the tunnel thanks to the vaccines we are now seeing, and the sacrifices we make this year can keep everyone safe until we can all be together once again next year,” added Dr. Paez.

Whatever way people choose to celebrate the holidays, Dr. Paez reminds everyone to follow some commonsense safety precautions that public health experts have been recommending since the start of the pandemic to keep you and others safe from COVID-19: wear a mask, social distance staying at least six feet apart from anyone not in your household, wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth and don’t go out when feeling sick and avoid contact with those, who are sick. For more information on Baystate Health, people may visit baystatehealth.org.

MASTERPLAN | from page 1

The regional housing plan concludes that housing costs in the region exceed the ability to pay for many households.

“Just thinking about the overall vision for Palmer’s housing, what does that look like?” Goris-Kolb said. “How is housing discussed in the community? Is it a political issue? What opportunities are there for new housing in Palmer?”

At the moment, not many, according to Palmer Town Planner Linda Leduc.

“No one’s knocking down our doors to build subdivisions,” she said at one point.

In a poll held during the forum, 40% of participants said they would be open to “new housing types” in their neighborhood; 40% said “no” and 15 percent said “maybe.”

Earlier, Goris-Kolb noted, “the town has made efforts to diversify its housing types” and has zoning for “more multifamily dwelling units” and “higher density residential neighborhoods.”

He also said it’s important to balance residential and commercial needs when regulating how the vacant land in town is developed.

“You probably don’t want to encroach on our commercial and industrial areas,” he said.

“Those areas are important. In fact, you might want to go do a little bit of other types of converting—converting some of these residential [parcels] to commercial/industrial.”

During the public comment period, Chris Smith advocated for new single-family homes.

“I see a lot of focus in this presentation based on multi-housing units,” she said. “And I have a concern from that specific focus based on costs of related services to multi-housing units. That increases your school costs in many instances and in many other services.”

Smith also made the distinction between perception and reality and wonders if the part of Palmer not located in the downtown area is getting enough recognition.

“One individual spoke about the image of our downtown or the areas that people see,” she said. “And I agree with that. However, when you get out of that Route 20, Route 32 area, we have some very lovely homes. So I really hope that in this focus group that we talk more about bringing in young families and improving the image of our town. There is a lot of issues with some of the lower income housing that we have here. And I’m not trying to be biased about this, but I think we need to change the image and we need to start focusing on other areas of town that are outside [downtown] and give those people the credit that they deserve for the taxes that they are paying on those houses.”

IN THE ‘TOOLKIT’

Although it’s “not something that’s currently approved or has been enacted in Palmer,” the Community Preservation Act, Goris-Kolb said, is a potential tool the town could use to address issues documented in the master plan.

“The Community Preservation Act provides funding for affordable housing, but it also provides funding for open space and recreation recreation projects, as well as historic preservation projects. And another tool that municipalities within Massachusetts has in their toolbox, potentially, is the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust,” he said.

“The Affordable Housing Trust is usually enacted by the town legislature, whatever form that may take, and funding can be funneled from the Community Preservation Act. It can be funneled from inclusionary zoning, could be funneled through developer fees or through a town general fund. This is a tool that can be used to fund affordable housing, whether it’s a private or non-profit developer. The town and the board of trustees of the trust has the ability to identify what projects it wants to prioritize and fund.

HEALTH AND THE COMMUNITY

Becky Basch, health and land-use planner at the Pioneer

Valley Planning Commission, talked about the town’s demographics and how access to transportation, socializing, and access to quality food, among other issues, affects the community. She also talked about an initiative to improve health in all communities.

“The Mass Motion program promotes active living and healthy eating to improve health and reduce obesity and other related chronic diseases,” she said.

“We put together a working group made up of representatives from Baystate Health Clinic, Quaboag Valley CDC, the Palmer Senior Center – Jessica Sizer’s on it from the [Palmer] Town Council and the Master Plan Steering Committee – to put together this health agenda for the master plan. We are focusing on access to healthy food opportunities to exercise and be able to walk and bike to work or to school and planning for healthy aging. We currently have a survey out called the Healthy Palmer Survey, and it’s been posted on Facebook and a number of places and also on the master plan website and send some of the questions on the survey focus on housing, particularly for older adults. I wanted to talk a little bit tonight about housing as it relates to health.”

According to Basch, “housing is one of the social determinants of health which are factors beyond access to good medical care that affects one’s health. The idea is that one’s social and physical environments have as much impact on health as one’s access to health care facilities and healthy behaviors are also another factor. So housing, employment, education, transportation, income and one’s community all have impacts on health. So when we talk about housing elements that it impacts health include quality.”

For senior citizens on limited, fixed incomes, it could be a time for difficult decisions, Basch said.

“Many older adults may want to downsize and stay in the community, so some communities are allowing cottage style housing,” she said, using a community in Northampton as one example.

“It’s a number of very small houses on a lot within the residential neighborhood. It’s an example of cottage housing that they’re trying out there and it allows for a smaller living area – less to maintain and a small community around it.”

“Accessory apartments are another way for older and older people can stay in their homes,” Basch said. “So either move into a smaller unit and rent out the house or apartment for income. And as I mentioned [earlier] those are allowed in Palmer with some restrictions in some districts.”

Other possibilities for older folks, she said, are “more affordable rental units and a home modification grant or loan program, which I believe is already in existence, and also housing that’s close to services or amenities with assisted living facilities and accessory apartments and long-term care facilities.”

WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

The sixth interactive forum will be held at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 17 and focuses on the element of climate adaptation and sustainability. Leveraging the town’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan, this element will look at the town’s climate projections and vulnerability analysis to comprehensively address future climate change through methods of resiliency.

No. 7 will be held 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 28. The topic is on natural resources, open space and recreation. Referencing the town’s certified Open Space and Recreation Plan from 2015, this element will expand upon that plan’s contents to address needs in consideration of projected population trends. An important aspect of this element will be weighing the trade-offs between various land uses and competing demands.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Town Planner Linda Leduc at lleduc@townof-palmer.com or 283-2605.



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